

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 200945Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2956

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USUN 1324

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1817

EXDIS

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, UK

SUBJECT: UK RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

REF STATE 47885

1. MARCH 20 ROK PRESS COVERAGE OF ROK ECONOMIC PLANNING BOARD MINISTER TAE WAN-SON'S VISIT TO UK HAS INCLUDED WIRE SERVICE REPORT FROM LONDON THAT BRITISH ARE CONSIDERING A QUOTE TRADE LINK UNQUOTE WITH NORTH KOREA. ACCORDING TO REPORT, INFORMED SOURCES IN LONDON SAID THE LINK WOULD BE CONFINED TO TRADE AND WOULD HAVE NO POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. SOURCES ALSO SAID FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN HAD TOLD TAE OF THE BRITISH PLAN, DETAILS OF WHICH WERE NOT REPORTED.

2. BRITISH EMBASSY IN SEOUL BELIEVES STORY WAS LEAKED TO PRESS BY KOREAN SIN LONDON. ACCORDING TO BRITISH EMBOFF, TAE HAD BEEN EXPECTED T TAKE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO LONDON TO MAKE PERSONAL APPEAL TO LABOR GOVERNMENT NOT TO PROCEED WITH DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTH KOREANS. RESULTS OF TAE'S REPRESENTATION ARE NOT YET KNOWN TO BRITISH EMBASSY.

3. DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED REFTEL WERE ALSO PASSED TO US BY
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BRITISH HERE, WHO STATE THAT UK-NORTH KOREAN TRADE RELATIONS

WILL BE HANDLED THROUGH SINO-BRITISH TRADE COUNCIL, A
NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD DEAL WITH SMALL
NORTH KOREAN TRADE OFFICE BRITISH ARE WILLING TO ALLOW IN
LONDON. BRITISH EMBASSY HAS TOLD US IN STRICT
CONFIDENCE THAT VISIT BY BRITISH BUSINESSMEN TO PYONGYANG
(REFTEL) TO PROPOSE THIS ARRANGEMENT HAD IN FACT ALREADY
TAKEN PLACE IN FEBRUARY, PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR PETERSEN'S LAST
EXCHANGE WITH MOFA ON THE SUBJECT. INFORMATION ON ANY
NORTH KOREAN RESPONSE HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED BY BRITISH
EMBASSY, WHICH SAYS IT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY COMMUNICATIONS
ON SUBJECT SINCE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE. HOWEVER,
BRITISH EMBOFF THOUGHT THAT NEW GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO
ALLOW COURSE SET IN MOTION UNDER THE OLD ONE TO CONTINUE.
HABIB

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